

ECEY5009 - Well-being, care and healthy living Portfolio

Jordan MacDonald 2411206

Contents

1. Presentation Video link [Video Presentation 2411206 - Made with Clipchamp.mp4](#)
(also emailed)
2. Presentation and reference list

AI statement

I acknowledge the use of ChatCPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 15th June 2025, I asked if the platform could give me ideas for subheadings on my presentation, some of which I used.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence

Obesity Presentation and reference list

Prynhawn da, my name is Jordan MacDonald student number 2411206. My chosen aspect of health concern is childhood obesity.

This topic is especially relevant because according to Public Health Wales (2022) childhood obesity rates have risen dramatically over the past seven years, with Children's Commissioner for Wales (2024) reporting that children in Wales are more likely to be measured overweight than those who live in England and Scotland. NHS England (2024) says childhood obesity poses both immediate and long terms consequences to children's physical and mental health, evidence of this will be explored in depth throughout this presentation.

In this presentation, I will begin by defining what childhood obesity is, what causes children to become overweight and the consequences it has on children's lives. I will then explore limitations and challenges surrounding obesity in early childhood and look at prevention and intervention strategies. Finally, I will consider the role of the early years practitioner in supporting children who are overweight.

What is Obesity?

World Health Organization (2023) defines obesity as a person whose body carries an abnormal or excess amount of fat that poses a health risk to them. Usually caused by the consumption of excess calories, especially foods that are high in fat and sugar (NHS, 2023). Obesity can be measured by assessing a person's Body Mass Index, also known as (BMI), BMI is calculated by dividing an individual's weight in kilograms by their height in metres (Obesity UK, 2024). As stated by NHS (2023) it can be complex when measuring children for obesity, this is because they are still growing meaning their measurements can vary. Therefore, using BMI alone, as is done with adults, is not effective. Instead, BMI percentiles are used to assess children's weight. Percentiles compare a child's BMI results with that of children in the same age and sex group as them, helping to identify if the child falls within a healthy weight range (Kirkilas, 2022).

Common contributing factors of Childhood Obesity

Both the World Health Organization (2023) and National Assembly for Wales (no date) state that childhood obesity is a serious public health concern, with reports predicting the percentage of overweight children will continue to rise in the years ahead. Sahoo, *et al.* (2015) says that genetics can also play a role in cases of childhood obesity; however, statistics show that genetics only make up for less than 5% of childhood obesity cases, indicating that it is not the cause of the childhood obesity crisis. According to the Children's Commissioner for Wales (2024) and National Assembly for Wales (no date) Wales has the highest recorded number of obese children in the UK. Statistics by Public Health Wales (2024) show a considerable difference between the number of obese children living in rural areas compared to those living in urban areas. As Wales has a largely rural population with approximately one in three people living in rural areas, in comparison to only one in five people in England, this could be a factor contributing to the statistics (Rural Health and Care, 2017). The Index of Multiple Deprivation also known as (IMD) measures how deprived an area is using 7 factors, these factors include family income, health, and lifestyle. Although not everyone living in those areas is necessarily deprived, overall, this method allows for ease of comparison (NHS England, 2024; GOV.UK, 2019).

Deprivation refers to the conditions in which people live in, when a person is deprived, they lack physical, emotional and financial resources to meet their needs which together can be seen as living in poverty (Mack, 2016). Public Health Wales (2024), pointed out a clear association between deprivation and obesity, synthesising that children living in deprived areas are more likely to be obese and living in poverty.

What is poverty?

Poverty is often defined by not having enough money to meet basic needs, an example of this is, not having money to buy food to nourish families, to pay utility bills to keep homes warm or even not being able to afford mortgage or rent payments on the homes people live in. These financial stresses put people under constant strain that effects their well-being and deprives them of a chance to reach their full potential in life (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2024). In the same way Maslow (1943) holds the view that humans need their basic needs met to reach actualisation, this example is illustrated in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model.

Cost of living and access to healthy food

Many families in the UK are facing the effects of the cost of living crisis, which has caused a rapid increase in the price of food (Hourston, 2022). The cost of healthy food plays a major role in health-related inequalities. On average healthier foods cost three times more, than less healthier options, because of this low-income families are more likely to choose the cheaper, less nutritious foods (The Food Foundation, 2023). Likewise, Children's Commissioner for Wales (2024) say that families are finding it increasingly difficult to afford to buy fresh and quality food in their weekly shop, this is leaving parents to feel like they have no choice but to buy highly processed cheaper foods. Barnardo's (2024) is a charity that runs over 2,000 food banks across the UK to help support families who are unable to afford essentials, food parcels are available for those in need. Barnardos also offer healthy recipe ideas on their website, however, the recipes listed are made with fresh ingredients that are not available from their food banks, this shows that even though food banks are helpful for families living in poverty, making healthy food still requires fresh ingredients that might not be affordable for families visiting food banks. Mainstone-Cotton (2017) says that poverty has a detrimental effect on health outcomes.

Health risks and emotional impacts of obesity

Children who consume highly processed foods on a regular basis pose a long-term health risk of living with obesity; obesity increases their chances of developing several other health problems in future, an example of these are type 2 diabetes, heart disease and even some types of cancer (NHS, 2023). Furthermore, GOV.UK (2022) says that obesity is linked to poor mental health and well-being, this is because children can be bullied by peers because of their appearance when they are overweight, which triggers feelings of low self-esteem, stress and depression. Those feelings often lead children to take time away from school this has a secondary impact on their education. WHO (2020) state that if an individual is overweight in childhood they are more likely to remain obese into adulthood.

Lifestyle, family habits and fast-food culture

University of Michigan Health (2021) suggests that lifestyles have an impact on obesity, parents have reported that the stresses and demands of work, school and daily life, leave them with little time to prepare and cook fresh meals at home, meaning families end up making poorer food choices, for example, opting for quick convenient high calorie fast foods and take away meals, exposing children to increased consumption of fast food. Fast food refers to highly processed foods, usually made with refined carbohydrates, added sugars and fats, typically these foods are high in sodium and sometimes deep fried (Livestrong.com, 2009). Most parents acknowledge that fast food is an unhealthy option for their children however they defend their choice of buying fast food because they feel they are too busy to make food at home (University of Michigan Health, 2021). Boutelle, *et al.* (2007) say that fast food might be a convenient alternative occasionally, but regular consumption of fast food is negatively associated with poorer health increasing the risk of obesity.

Parents as first role models

Good nutrition is essential for healthy growth and development, and parents are instrumental when it comes to their children's health and well-being (Sahoo, *et al.*, 2015; Bank, 2015). Children naturally imitate the behaviours of their parents and so parents act as role models for their children, as children are easily influenced, they

learn a lot from observing the behaviours and habits of those closest to them (Mainstone-Cotton, 2017). An example of this in theory can be seen in Vygotsky (1978) Zone of Proximal Development also known as (ZPD), he created a visual model that represents the steps between what the learner is capable of doing unsupported, and what the learner can achieve with support from more knowledgeable adult. This is especially prominent when building positive food relationships in early childhood, parents play a key role in helping to prevent or reduce the chances of obesity in early childhood, when parents adopt a healthy lifestyle themselves (Ling, 2023). Albataineh, Badran and Tayyem (2019) agree that children imitate the lifestyles of their parents, and what they eat children are likely to eat, additionally if parents are obese their children are likely to become obese. Child Feeding Guide (2025) gives advice about what parents can do to promote healthy eating as a family; suggestions include making time to eat together and talking positively about healthy food the family can enjoy.

The importance of physical activity

Amongst the many contributing factors of childhood obesity is children's lack of physical activity (Sahoo, *et al.*, 2015). Every Child Wales (2023) suggests children should have the opportunity to play outdoors every day because it contributes to maintaining a healthy weight. White (2020) also emphasises the significance of play contributing to physical health.

Impact of covid and sedentary lifestyles

Reports show that in wake of the COVID-19 lockdowns, children's physical movement has lowered significantly, and sedentary lifestyles and use of screen time have increased (Jago, *et al.*, 2023). Sedentary refers to low physical movement (Cambridge Dictionary, no date). Fang, *et al.* (2019) believes obesity is linked to excessive screen time. Domingues-Montanari (2017) also says that screen time is associated with poor health, like obesity, depression and anxiety. Weight loss reduces the health implications that come with being obese, therefore it is necessary to prioritise ways to lose excess weight, such as eating healthily, exercising and playing, so that children can live a longer and healthier life (Public Health Wales, 2023). Regular exercise also helps to limit the amount of time children spend on screen (Safekidsnetwork.org, 2023).

Government responses to Childhood Obesity

The government is committed to addressing childhood obesity through policy and offering support for families living in Wales. Welsh Government (2019) are launching a programme called Healthy Weight Healthy Wales, the aim is to make it easier for everyone across Wales to choose healthier options by the year 2030, some of the changes they are proposing include, healthier food adverts on TV and financial support for families on low income. Welsh Government (2022) approved universal free school meals for all children in primary schools, this ensures all children especially those living in poverty will have access to a balanced warm meal that is in line with healthy eating guidelines. These strategies are in line with supporting the UNICEF (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child article 24, that says children have a human right to be as healthy as possible.

Role of an early year's practitioner in helping reduce childhood obesity

Early years practitioners cannot eliminate the inequalities families face that results in childhood obesity, however by embedding healthy practices into daily routines, offering support where possible and encouraging an active environment, early years practitioners can contribute to reducing childhood obesity (Taggart, et al., 2015). During the foundation stage of a child's life, practitioners are committed to collaborating with other health care professionals including health visitors, to provide families with any necessary support that will help children thrive both physically and mentally (Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood, 2025). Public Health England (2021) place responsibility on early years practitioners to engage in sustained shared thinking, as practitioners spend a lot of time with children, they are able to identify those children who are at risk of obesity, by supporting families and sharing information with other health professionals they are able to implement planning to help reduce the possibilities of obesity, this is discussed in depth in the Healthy Child Programme. Play is essential for children's physical health because it improves muscles, bones and it helps maintain a healthy weight (National Institute for Play, 2018) early year practitioners can support play by creating a safe and stimulating environment that encourages physical movement (White, 2020; Play Wales, 2024).

Conclusion

In summary, childhood obesity is a growing public health issue in Wales and across the UK. As explored in this presentation, the causes of childhood obesity are varied, and inequalities can include financial poverty, rising food costs leading to unhealthy eating, sedentary lifestyles and limiting physical activity. Parents, caregivers and environmental factors in early childhood have a significant influence on children's health and well-being. Government initiatives and public health policies, such as the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales programme show commitment to addressing the challenges resulting in childhood obesity. Early years practitioners also play a meaningful role in supporting families by encouraging early healthy habits and recognising the impact play has on maintaining physical and emotional well-being. Childhood obesity is proven to be a difficult problem to solve, but with knowledge and support the community surrounding each child can contribute to giving every child the best chance at a healthy start in life.

Thank you.

Reference list

Albataineh, S.R., Badran, E.F. and Tayyem, R.F. (2019) 'Overweight and obesity in childhood: Dietary, biochemical, inflammatory and lifestyle risk factors', *Obesity Medicine*, 15, p. 100112. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obmed.2019.100112>. (Accessed 14 June 2025).

Barnardo's (2024) *Cost-of-living crisis: where to find support if you're struggling*. Available at: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/child-poverty/get-support>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

Bank, D. (2015) *The Early Years*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Boutelle, K.N, Fulkerson, J, Neumark-Sztainer, D, Story, M and French, S (2007) 'Fast food for family meals: relationships with parent and adolescent food intake, home food availability and weight status', *Public Health Nutrition*, 10(1), pp. 16–23. doi:10.1017/S136898000721794X.

Children's Commissioner for Wales (2024) *Obesity/ Healthy Weight - Children's Commissioner for Wales, Children's Commissioner for Wales*. Available at: <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/our-work/policy-positions/obesity-healthy-weight/>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

Cambridge Dictionary (no date) sedentary. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sedentary>. (Accessed 14 June 2025)

Child Feeding Guide (2025) *Role modelling*. www.childfeedingguide.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.childfeedingguide.co.uk/tips/common-feeding-pitfalls/role-modelling/>. (Accessed 15 June 2025).

Department of Health and Social Care (2019) *UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d839543ed915d52428dc134/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf>.

Domingues-Montanari, S. (2017) 'Clinical and Psychological Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Children', *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 53(4), pp. 333–338. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpc.13462>. (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

Every Child (2016) *10 steps to a healthy weight Every Child Wales*. Available at: <https://everychild.wales/parents/>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

Fang, K., Mu, M., Liu, K and He, Y (2019). 'Screen time and childhood overweight/obesity: A systematic review and meta-analysis', *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 45(5), pp. 744–753. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12701>. (Accessed 14 June 2025)

GOV.UK (2022) Childhood obesity: applying All Our Health, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-applying-all-our-health/childhood-obesity-applying-all-our-health>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

GOV.UK (2019) *The English Indices of Deprivation 2019* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/853811/loD2019_FAQ_v4.pdf#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Index%20of%20Multiple%20Deprivation%20%28IMD%29%3F,Indices%20of%20Deprivation%20%28loD%29%20%28described%20in%20Question%201%29. (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

Hourston, P. (2022) *Cost of Living Crisis*, *Institute for Government*. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/cost-living-crisis>. (Accessed 14 June 2025).

HENRY (2019) *Practitioner training* Available at: <https://www.henry.org.uk/improving-practitioner-effectiveness>. (Accessed 15 June 2025)

Jago, R., Salway, R., House, R., Walker, R., Emm-Collison, L., Sansum, K., Breheny, K., Reid, T., Churchward, S., Williams, J, G., Foster, C., Hollingworth, W. and de Vocht, F. (2023) 'Short and medium-term effects of the COVID-19 lockdowns on child and parent accelerometer-measured physical activity and sedentary time: a natural experiment', *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 20(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-023-01441-1>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2024) *What is poverty?*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/what-is-poverty>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

Kirkilas, G. (2022) *Body-Mass Index Formula (BMI) in Children*, HealthyChildren.org. Available at: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/obesity/Pages/Body-Mass-Index-Formula.aspx>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

Ling, J. (2023) 'Embracing parenting role in childhood obesity', *BMC Public Health*, 23(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-16039-2>.

Livestrong.com (2009). Available at: https://www.livestrong.com/article/49366-definition-fast-foods/#google_vignette. (Accessed 14 June 2025).

Mainstone-Cotton, S. (2017) *Promoting young children's emotional health and wellbeing : a practical guide for professionals and parents*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). *A theory of human motivation*. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.

Mack, J. (2016) *Deprivation and poverty | Poverty and Social Exclusion*, Poverty.ac.uk. Available at: <https://www.poverty.ac.uk/definitions-poverty/deprivation-and-poverty>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

National Assembly for Wales (No date) *Childhood Obesity*. Available at: https://senedd.wales/media/ujodr5oo/child_obesity_booklet-english.pdf. (12 June 2025).

National Institute for Play (2018) *The Importance of Play for Children - National Institute for Play*. Available at: <https://nifplay.org/play-note/child-play/>. (Accessed: 15 June 2025)

NHS (2023) Obesity, NHS. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/obesity/>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

NHS (2023) *Advice for parents of overweight children*, nhs.uk. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/childrens-weight/advice-for-parents-overweight-children/>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

NHS England (2024) *Health Survey for England, 2022 Part 2*, Digital.nhs.uk. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2022-part-2/childrens-overweight-and-obesity>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

Obesity UK (2024) *What is Obesity? - Obesity UK, Obesity UK*. Available at: <https://obesityuk.org.uk/what-is-obesity/>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

Play Wales (2024) *Play - Play.wales*. Available at: <https://play.wales/play/#1> (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

Public Health Wales (2024) *Child Measurement Programme - Public Health Wales, phw.nhs.wales*. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/child-measurement-programme/>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

Public Health Wales (2023) *Overweight and Obesity - Public Health Wales, phw.nhs.wales*. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/overweight-and-obesity/>.

Public Health Wales (2022) *Child Measurement Programme shows increase in numbers of children with obesity, Public Health Wales*. Available at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/news/child-measurement-programme-shows-increase-in-numbers-of-children-with-obesity/>. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

Public Health England (2021) Early years high impact area 4: Supporting healthy weight and nutrition, GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-of-public-health-services-for-children/early-years-high-impact-area-4-supporting-healthy-weight-and-nutrition>. (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood (2025) *Big Change Starts Small*. Available at: https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/course/format/tiles/mod_view.php?cmid=442027 (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

Rural Health and Care (2017) *A profile of rural health in Wales | Rural Health and Care Wales, Rural Health and Care Wales*. Rural Health and Care Wales. Available at: <https://ruralhealthandcare.wales/resources/profile-rural-health-wales/>.

Sahoo, K., Sahoo, B., Choudhury, A, K., Soif, Y., Kumar, R., Bhadoria, A, S. (2015) 'Childhood obesity: Causes and Consequences', *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(2), p. 187. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.154628>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

Safekidsnetwork.org (2023) *The Benefits of Limiting Screen Time: Exploring the Positive Impacts - My Blog* Available at: <https://safekidsnetwork.org/the-benefits-of-limiting-screen-time-exploring-the-positive-impacts/>.

Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P. and Siraj, I. (2015) Effective pre-school, primary and secondary education project (EPPSE 3-16+). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/455670/RB455_Effective_pre-school_primary_and_secondary_education_project.pdf.pdf. (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

The Food Foundation (2023) *From purse to plate: implications of the cost of living crisis on health*. Available at: https://foodfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/TFF_Cost%20of%20living%20briefing.pdf (Accessed 13 June 2025).

UNICEF (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/media/52626/file>.

University of Michigan Health (2021) *Report Highlights Parent Views on Fast Food and Family Meals Mott Poll Report NATIONAL POLL ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH* (2021). Available at: https://mottnpch.org/sites/default/files/documents/092021_FastFood.pdf (Accessed: 14 June 2025).

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Watkins, P. (2024) *The rise in obesity: some food for thought*, *research.senedd.wales*. Available at: <https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/the-rise-in-obesity-some-food-for-thought/>. (12 June 2025).

Welsh Government (2019) *Making the healthy choice the easy choice. Youth and community version*. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/healthy-weight-healthy-wales-youth-community.pdf>. (Accessed: 15 June 2025).

Welsh Government (2022) Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM), GOV.WALES. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/universal-primary-free-school-meals-upfsm>. (Accessed: 15 June 2025)

World Health Organization (2023) *Obesity, World Health Organization*. World Health Organization. Available at: https://www.who.int/health-topics/obesity/#tab=tab_1. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

World Health Organization (2023) *Obesity, World Health Organization*. World Health Organization. Available at: https://www.who.int/health-topics/obesity/#tab=tab_1. (Accessed: 12 June 2025).

White, J. (2020) *Playing and learning outdoors : the practical guide and sourcebook for excellence in outdoor provision and practice with young children*. Third edition. London ; Routledge.

WHO (2020) *Noncommunicable diseases: Childhood Overweight and Obesity*, *www.who.int*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/noncommunicable-diseases-childhood-overweight-and-obesity>. (Accessed: 14 June 2025).